

## MEDIA RELEASE

The Studio Museum in Harlem  
144 West 125th Street  
New York, NY 10027  
studiomuseum.org/press



## MORE THAN 650 WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION OF LEGENDARY ARTS PATRON PEGGY COOPER CAFRITZ GIFTED TO THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM AND THE DUKE ELLINGTON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

**Unprecedented Bequest Marks the Largest Ever Gift of Contemporary Work by Artists of African Descent**

**New York, NY, October 8, 2018** — Thelma Golden, Director and Chief Curator of The Studio Museum in Harlem, and Tia Powell Harris, Chief Executive Officer of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, D.C., today announced that the legendary arts patron, educator and civil rights activist Peggy Cooper Cafritz (1947–2018) bequeathed the majority of her unparalleled art collection to the two institutions. The bequest of more than 400 works to the Studio Museum and over 250 to the Duke Ellington School marks the largest gift ever made of contemporary art by artists of African descent.

The gift to the Studio Museum encompasses a multigenerational who's who of artists of African descent, and will both bolster and add to the strengths of the existing collection. Among the artists represented are many alumni of the Museum's signature *Artist-in-Residence* program, or those who have shown work there—demonstrating the shared commitment of Cafritz and the Museum to supporting black artists throughout their careers. These works will join the Studio Museum's over 2,000-object collection just as the Museum begins to celebrate its 50th anniversary year. Artists include: Nina Chanel Abney, Derrick Adams, Sadie Barnette, Sanford Biggers, Iona



**Nina Chanel Abney, *Untitled*, 2012.** Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 36 in. Courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, © Nina Chanel Abney

rozeal brown, Nick Cave, Renee Cox, Noah Davis, Abigail DeVille, Emory Douglas, Derek Fordjour, Samuel Fosso, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Theaster Gates, David Hammons, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Samuel Levi Jones, Titus Kaphar, Deana Lawson, Simone Leigh, Eric Nathaniel Mack, Kerry James Marshall, Wangechi Mutu, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Chris Ofili, Lorraine O'Grady, Ebony G. Patterson, Martin Puryear, Deborah Roberts, Tschabalala Self, Malick Sidibé, Lorna Simpson, Henry Taylor, Mickalene Thomas, Hank Willis Thomas, James VanDerZee, William Villalongo, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, Kehinde Wiley, Jack Whitten, Saya Woolfalk, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, and more.

The gift to the Duke Ellington School of the Arts—which Cafritz co-founded in 1974 and guided to its current status as one of the nation's leading incubators of artistic talent—includes many artists who have had a personal connection to the institution, whether as faculty members (Bill Harris, Jacqueline Maggi) or alumni (Hank Willis Thomas, Chinedu Felix Osuchukwu).

Additional artists in the gift include BK Adams, Miya Ando, Alexandre Arrechea, Louise Bourgeois, Mark Thomas Gibson, Hannah Greely, Walter Loby Hamilton, Jas Knight, Eva Sussman, and many others. The works will form the core of an active research and display collection for students at the Ellington School, home to the only high school Museum Studies program in the country.

Thelma Golden said, "We are humbled that the indomitable Peggy Cooper Cafritz chose the Studio Museum to help steward the legacy of her incredible vision. Peggy was a trailblazing champion of artists of African descent, and at her core believed deeply in the power of art. Through her collecting and her support of artists, she quite literally transformed the way the world viewed black artists. She was also a great builder and supporter of institutions. Now, that astonishing belief in artists will prove transformative to the Studio Museum, as this gift broadens and deepens our collection at a historic moment in the life of our institution."

Raymond J. McGuire, Chairman of the Board of the Studio Museum, added, "Peggy Cooper Cafritz set the standard to which we aspire to emulate. Throughout her life she was the model of the quintessential arts patron. With her boundless joy, passion and determination she showed us what could and should be done. With this staggering bequest, she has given us more than a gift of art. She has given us her example. As Trustees of the Studio Museum, we dedicate ourselves to living up to this defining moment in our history."

Tia Powell Harris, Chief Executive Officer at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, said, "Peggy still guides every step we take at the Duke Ellington School. By using this bequest to achieve her goal of imbuing our building with art, she will forever inspire not only our students and their families but the members of the public who come to us as a magnet for performances and exhibitions. It's as if we will now have direct access to Peggy's amazing vision, seeing the world's possibilities as she did."

Charles K. Barber, President of the Board of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts Project, said, "It was because of Peggy that we have one of the leading high school arts programs in the country. Now our students



**BK Adams**, *Study of Transformation 1 (Blue Horse)*, 2010. Steel, rubber, plastic, metal, acrylic paint, and copper, 29 x 14 x 4 in. Courtesy BK ADAMS•I AM ART

will curate and experience the artworks of the woman who made that program possible. It was because of Peggy that community service is woven into our school's mission. Now our students will look at Peggy's artworks and see vividly what it means to give back to the community. We can never thank her enough."

Zachary Cafritz, Peggy Cooper Cafritz's son, said, "This is, of course, a bittersweet moment. Our mom would have loved to see this bequest come to fruition. But we're thrilled this collection will live on in two places so close to her heart, the Duke Ellington School of the Arts and The Studio Museum in Harlem. Both institutions are dedicated, as she was, to fostering the careers of young artists of color. Thelma Golden is an incomparable leader and, more importantly, one of mom's greatest friends. We could not ask for better stewards of her legacy."

This landmark contribution paves the way for further research and allows both institutions to reassert their commitment to creating a culturally vibrant space for artists of African descent to live, learn, work, and create.

### **About Peggy Cooper Cafritz**

Peggy Cooper Cafritz was a visionary civil rights activist, educator, and avid art collector. One of America's best-known patrons of the arts, she amassed one of the country's largest private collections of art by artists of African descent. As an undergraduate at George Washington University she co-founded, along with choreographer Mike Malone, a summer program which grew to become the Duke Ellington School of the Arts. The program was intended to be a center for minority artists to create. Over the course of her career, Cafritz was a fellow of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, president of the District of Columbia State Board of Education and founder of George Washington University's Black Student Union. In addition to art, Cafritz also cultivated people. She surrounded herself with a diverse circle of politicians, artists, celebrities and educators and was a change-maker in the art world.

### **About Duke Ellington School of the Arts**

The Duke Ellington School of the Arts was established in 1974 and remains the sole Washington, D.C. public high school to offer a dual curriculum encompassing professional arts training and academic enrichment, in preparation for college and careers in the arts. Its mission is to nurture and inspire passion for arts and learning in talented students who might not otherwise have an opportunity to develop their artistic skills. Its founders were D.C. and avid art collector Peggy Cooper Cafritz along with the late choreographer Mike Malone. Named after Duke Ellington and one of his jazz bands, The Washingtonians, the school became the creative soul of the District and reflects the cultural diversity of the United States.

Ranked as one of D.C. Public Schools' highest performing high schools, The Duke Ellington School of the Arts is firmly committed to preparing its students for the demands of a changing global society, to give them the tools they need for success in their future educational, artistic, and professional endeavors. The school has been particularly recognized for its commitment to community service and its distinguished Museum Studies Program, the only one offered in the country, which allows students to learn and practice the function of museums through collection, preservation, conservation, and exhibition.

## About The Studio Museum in Harlem

Founded in 1968 by a diverse group of artists, community activists and philanthropists, The Studio Museum in Harlem is internationally known for its catalytic role in promoting the work of artists of African descent. As it celebrates its 50th anniversary, the Studio Museum is preparing to construct a new home at its longtime location on Manhattan's West 125th Street, designed by internationally renowned architect David Adjaye of Adjaye Associates in collaboration with Cooper Robertson. The first building created expressly for the institution's program, the new building will enable the Studio Museum to better serve a growing and diverse audience, provide additional educational opportunities for people of all ages, expand its program of world-renowned exhibitions, effectively display its singular collection and strengthen its trailblazing *Artist-in-Residence* program.

While the Studio Museum is currently closed in preparation for construction, the Museum has opened Studio Museum 127, a temporary programming space located at 429 West 127th Street, and is working to deepen its roots in the community through *inHarlem*, a dynamic set of collaborative programs in our neighborhood. The Museum's groundbreaking exhibitions, thought-provoking conversations, and engaging art-making workshops continue at a variety of partner and satellite locations in Harlem.

For more information visit [studiomuseum.org](http://studiomuseum.org)  
Find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube:  
[@studiomuseum](#)

For more information about the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, visit [ellingtonschool.org](http://ellingtonschool.org) or:  
Twitter/Facebook/Instagram: [@DukeEllingtonDC](#)

## CONTACT

Elizabeth Gwinn  
The Studio Museum in Harlem  
[egwinn@studiomuseum.org](mailto:egwinn@studiomuseum.org)  
646.214.2142

Meagan Jones  
Polskin Arts and Communications Counselors  
[meagan.jones@finnpartners.com](mailto:meagan.jones@finnpartners.com)  
212.715.1602